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SUBJECT: WEST NUSA TENGGARA: HIGH EXPECTATIONS FOR CHANGE FROM THE  
NEW GOVERNOR

REF: A. SURABAYA 82 (ANOTHER GOLKAR GUBERNATORIAL DEFEAT)  
[1](#)B. SURABAYA 119 (LIFE FOR LOMBOK'S AHMADIYAH SECT)

SURABAYA 00000133 001.2 OF 002

This message is sensitive but unclassified. Please protect accordingly.

[1](#)1. (SBU) Summary: Elected on an anti-corruption platform, recently inaugurated Governor of West Nusa Tenggara (NTB) Muhammad Zainul Majdi remains extremely popular among the local population of Mataram, the provincial capital. Political observers, however, are skeptical that he has the skills or discipline necessary to achieve results. A well-respected religious leader, Zainul promotes a political vision that emphasizes religious and ethnical pluralism and focuses on managing social capital to spur development and attract investment. It remains to be seen, however, if his administration can organize itself sufficiently to follow through. While religiously conservative, NTB's electorate has traditionally supported Golkar party members in local elections and supported secular, nationalist candidates with military backgrounds in the 2004 presidential elections -- preferring General Wiranto in the first round before supporting President Yudhoyono in the run-off. Political observers expect that inclination to continue in the 2009 presidential elections. The provincial government seems at a loss with how to deal with members of the Ahmadiyah sect. End Summary.

[1](#)2. (SBU) During a recent visit to Mataram, the capital of NTB, located on the island of Lombok, Surabaya Principal Officer was regaled with stories by average citizens about the positive change newly inaugurated Governor Muhammad Zainul Majdi had brought to NTB. Average citizens with whom we spoke were unanimous in their praise for his anti-corruption efforts. Political observers were more skeptical, acknowledging his popularity but warning that, public opinion aside, very little had changed. Adhar Hakim, NGO activist and journalist, commented to us that Zainul's administration was still uncoordinated and chaotic, with little of the discipline necessary to get things done. Zainul's ability to deliver on promises remains to be seen.

Presidential and Party Politics  
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[1](#)3. (SBU) Adhar commented that NTB's enthusiasm for the new governor, a Tuan Guru (religious teacher), did not mean that NTB voters were inclined to support a religious leader or candidate from an Islamic party for president. Given a choice, he explained, NTB voters preferred a secular nationalist, usually

with a military background, to lead the country. In the 2004 presidential election, NTB gave the majority of its votes to General Wiranto in the first round. In the second round, they supported President Yudhoyono. He added that Golkar remains the most popular party in NTB at the local level, with Golkar members filling most local parliamentary and local government seats. However, in the NTB governor's election, like so many recent elections throughout Indonesia, personal characteristics and issues drove voters, not party membership. Zainul -- supported by the Islamic Prosperous Justice (PKS) and Crescent Star parties (PBB) -- was elected governor over the Golkar candidate because he was well-known, respected, and running an anti-corruption campaign against an incumbent accused of embezzlement, not solely because of his religious credentials (Ref A). (Note: In late October, the NTB Prosecutor's Office arrested former Governor Lalu Serinata on corruption charges.)

#### Government Priorities

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14. (SBU) Apologizing that the Governor was still in a meeting with the Secretary General from the Ministry of Education, Vice Governor Badrul Munir outlined for us Zainul's priorities. Noting that Zainul wanted to develop NTB as a 'province with faith,' Badrul said that the issue of religious and ethnic pluralism was paramount in all of the Governor's priorities. The Governor pledged to provide up to nine years of free education to the poor; provide free basic health services through existing local health clinics; build and repair infrastructure; develop the agro-industry; and support micro businesses, the 'people's economy.' Badrul noted that NTB currently ranks 32 out of 33 provinces on the Human Development Index, but ranks ninth in purchasing power. Improving NTB's ranking on the Human Development Index is a priority.

#### Tackling Corruption -- Attracting Investment

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15. (SBU) The Governor signed an MOU with the Prosecutor's Office, the provincial Police, and the Finance and Development Supervisory Board to work cooperatively to eradicate corruption. The local community has direct access to the local government through a special mail box and phone number to report incidents of corruption. As part of this effort, Zainul wants all public services to be open, transparent, accountable, and secure. This anti-corruption drive is also designed to give investors greater confidence in working in NTB.

16. (SBU) Asked about the provincial government's relationship with Newmont mining, which operates a gold mine on the NTB island of Sumbawa, Badrul said relations were very good. Government and Newmont officials have met four times since the new Governor was inaugurated. While revenue from the mine goes directly to the central government, Newmont has an active community development program in the area. NTB is looking to increase domestic and foreign investment in seaweed farming, fisheries, and livestock, but has yet to develop an 'investment profiles guide book' to distribute to potential investors. NTB is building a new international airport, scheduled for operations in late 2009, and hopes to boost tourism in the province as an alternative to neighboring Bali. An investor from Abu Dhabi is building a family-friendly resort aimed at Middle Eastern tourists on Lombok's south coast, hoping to take advantage of Lombok's Muslim culture and undiscovered beaches.

#### Ahmadiyah

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17. (SBU) Following up on Ref B, PO noted the USG's concern about treatment of the Ahmadiyah community and asked about the Governor's plans for the Lombok Ahmadiyah community living in temporary accommodations in Mataram. Badrul said the local government was providing food to the 150 refugees living in the Transito camp and trying to help them return to their home

villages. He stressed however that the government's efforts were complicated by the Ahmadi's insistence that they remain an 'exclusive' community with little interaction with other groups.

Badrul did not explain why this specific request made it difficult for the Ahmadis to return home or how the provincial government planned to proceed.

MCCLELLAND